

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action mailed March 3, 2003, claims 2 and 3 have been cancelled, claims 1 and 4-8 have been amended and claims 9-15 are newly added. Claims 1 and 4-15 are now active in this application, of which claims 1 and 9 are independent. The Office Action indicates that claims 3-5 are allowable if presented in independent form.

Based on the attached Amendments and the following Remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider the outstanding objections and rejections and they be withdrawn.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102

In the Office Action, claims 1 and 7 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) for being anticipated by U. S. Patent No. 6,081,310 issued to Katsuya, *et al.* (“Katsuya”). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

In this response, allowable claim 3 and its intervening claim 2 have been incorporated into its base claim 1. Thus, amended independent claim 1 is patentable over Katuyama. Claim 7 that is dependent from claim 1 would be also patentable at least for the same reason.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection over claims 1 and 7 be withdrawn.

In the Office Action, claim 1 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) for being anticipated by Japanese Patent Publication No. 10-186412 issued to Yudasaka, *et al.* (“Yudasaka”). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As previously mentioned, claim 1 has been amended to incorporate allowable claim 3 and its intervening claim 2, and, hence, is patentable over Yudasaka. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection over claim 1 be withdrawn.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103

In the Office Action, claim 2 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for being unpatentable over Yudasaka in view of U. S. Patent No. 6,323,521 issued to Seo ("Seo"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

In this response, claim 2 has been cancelled. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection over claim 2 be withdrawn.

In the Office Action, claims 6 and 7 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for being unpatentable over Yudasaka in view of U. S. Patent No. 5,917,563 issued to Matsushima ("Matsushima"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 6 and 7 are dependent from claim 1. As mentioned above, amended claim 1 contains subject matter of claim 3 which is patentable over all references cited in the Office Action. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection over claims 6 and 7 be withdrawn.

In the Office Action, claim 8 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for being unpatentable over Yudasaka in view of Seo and further in view of U. S. Patent No. 6,358,759 issued to Hirabayashi ("Hirabayashi"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 8 is dependent from claim 1. As mentioned above, amended claim 1 contains subject matter of claim 3 which is patentable over all references cited in the Office Action. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection over claim 8 be withdrawn.

Other Matters

In this response, claims 1 and 4-8 have been further amended for better wording and correcting informalities therein. Also, claims 9-15 have been newly added, of which claim 9 is independent.

CONCLUSION

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicants believe that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, claims 1-15 are in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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